

Dear Connecticut Transportation Committee:

I am unable to attend the February 25, 2015 Public Hearing on HB6818 Tolls at the State Borders and wish to submit my comments as follow.

I write you today to once again express my conditional support for re-implementing tolls in Connecticut. I say conditionally because there is much information out there regarding the congestion pricing and border toll study, and I want to be clear that I support tolls only with specific criteria.

I would support and encourage a tolling system that is 100% electronic and video-related, meaning NO toll booths and NO toll collectors. The technology to accomplish this exists and is being used today in this country. The example I've cited elsewhere is Highway 121 in Texas.

It is my understanding that the boothless systems allow cars to pass at speeds of up to 70mph. Cars that don't have EZ pass or other transponder systems have their license plates videotaped, and a monthly toll statement is mailed to them. There are projects under way to implement a 50 state reciprocity system for enforcement and collection services.

I would support and encourage a tolling system where rates would discourage truck traffic and peak hour vehicular traffic. I think a major component of any toll plan would be to encourage the transportation of goods to move towards rail and barge, and the transportation of people to move to mass transit. I do share the same concern as others that trying to reduce trucks on our highways could mean more trucks on local parallel roads, but I suggest a no through truck policy wherever the toll arms are installed.

Additionally, if it is legal to do so, I suggest that CT residents be exempt from paying tolls for the first 10,000 miles or so each year, or at least have a lower toll rate than those from other states.

I suggest you look at the sale or lease of the tolled highways, again, similar to the program in Texas. That state did a 50-year sale to the North Texas Toll Authority, who paid in excess of \$3 billion up front. Connecticut could also allow toll authorities or even private firms to lease the highways and profit from the tolls. The cash infusion to the state at the time of the leases could be in the tens of billions of dollars, and all of the administration and associated headcount costs would be with the authority and not the state. It's a win win win for the state, the toll authority and the taxpayers!

Finally, the main point I want to make is that no one is in favor of toll booths, and I don't believe any of you are suggesting booths that simply congest traffic, cause pollution and could result in dangerous accidents. But electronic and video tolling are the way of the future in this country, and I believe Connecticut could prosper from the implementation and ultimately fully fund the work we need on our roads and bridges.

Thank you

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